Secretary's Annual Report

Colombo University Faculty of Science Alumni Association – North America

(CUFSAA-NA)

Year 2025-2026

Executive Summary

Since the last AGM held on August 30, 2025, the CUFSAA-NA Executive Committee has been led by Dr. Chandrasiri Jayakody, President of CUFSAA-NA. During this period, members of the Executive Committee have actively participated in the Association's activities and contributed generously through their time, expertise, and financial support. The current Executive Committee members are listed below.

Chandrasiri Jayakody, *MI, USA* President	Oshadha K. Ranasingha, *MA, USA* Vice President	Vindula Alwis, *MI, USA*
Saliya De Silva, *NJ, USA* President-Elect	Sandya Liyanarachchi, *OH, USA* Treasurer	Narada Bombuwala Dewage *NJ, USA* Prabath Kuruwitaarachchi, *NC, USA*
Reshan Fernando, *NC, USA* Immediate Past President	Jeeva Witanachchi, *MI, USA* Assistant Treasurer	Unil Perera, *GA, USA*
Vicumpriya Perera, *OH, USA* Past President	Mahendra Munidasa, *ON, Canada* Secretary	Asoka Pinnaduwage, *ON, Canada* Kirthi Premadasa, *WI, USA*
L.C. Goonetilleke, *NJ, USA* Past President	*Wasundara Fernando, *NS, Canada* Assistant Secretary - *Aug 2025 to April 2026*	Gayan Premaratne *NJ, USA*
L.M.V. Tillekeratne, *OH, USA* Founder President	*Indika Mallawaarachchi, *VA, USA* Assistant Secretary -From May 2026	Kumuditha Ratnayake, *OR, USA* Nalin Samarasinha, *AZ, USA*
Sumedha Jayasena, *CA, USA* Vice President	*Jayani Dissanayake, *ON, Canada* *From May 2026*	Isurika Weerasinghe, *NC, USA*
Sachith Dissanayake, *VA, USA* Vice President		Dhanushan Wijayaratna, *MA, USA*

* During the year, Assistant Secretary Wasundara Fernando resigned from the Executive Committee in April 2026. CUFSAA-NA gratefully acknowledges her dedicated service and valuable contributions to the Association during her tenure.

Following her resignation, Executive Committee member Indika Mallawaarachchi assumed the position of Assistant Secretary, with the full support of the Executive Committee. In accordance with the CUFSAA-NA bylaws, Jayani Dissanayake was subsequently elected unanimously by the Executive Committee to fill the resulting vacancy on the Executive Committee.

CUFSAA-NA appreciates Indika Mallawaarachchi's willingness to assume the additional responsibilities of Assistant Secretary and warmly welcomes Jayani Dissanayake to the Executive Committee. The Association looks forward to their continued contributions and support in advancing its objectives.

The following activities were completed, initiated, or continued during the reporting period from August 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026.

CUFSAA-NA gratefully acknowledges the support of its members and well-wishers, whose contributions have been instrumental in the successful completion and continued advancement of our projects and initiatives during the past year. We also sincerely appreciate the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, its academic and administrative staff, project coordinators, and all others who contributed their expertise, guidance, and cooperation.

Completed Projects:

1. Synthetic Chemistry and Drug Discovery Laboratory Project

CUFSAA-NA successfully completed its commitment to support the establishment of the Synthetic Chemistry and Drug Discovery Laboratory at the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, in August 2026. Through a major fundraising initiative, CUFSAA-NA raised ~US$50,300 to transform an existing facility into a modern research laboratory. The project strengthens the Faculty's capacity for advanced chemical synthesis and drug discovery, while creating new opportunities for student and faculty research, industry collaboration, and innovation.

2. Launch Pad Student Grant Program (year 3 completed)

The Launch Pad Student Grant Program, a flagship CUFSAA-NA initiative in partnership with the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, provides vital financial assistance to undergraduates facing severe economic hardship. Each academic year, 36 financially disadvantaged special-degree students receive grants of US$360 each, disbursed in two six-month instalments.

The program has completed its initial three-year commitment, with the third-cycle students selected from 132 applicants through a rigorous inter-departmental assessment process. The first instalment was paid in July 2026, and the second is scheduled for December 2026. CUFSAA-NA is seeking support to extend this very important initiative and continue assisting future generations of students.

3. Gold Medals and Scholarships (completed for the year)

Professor M.L.T. Kannangara Gold Medal and Memorial Scholarships

A gold medal and scholarship project established by CUFSAA-NA in memory of Professor M.L.T. Kannangara, awards a gold medal to the most outstanding physics special student with first-class honors and provides two scholarships for students enrolled in the special degree physics programs. Two students received scholarships, and the gold medal was awarded to Ms. Sheahara De Silva in 2026, who has since begun her Ph.D. studies in Physics at the University of Cincinnati.

Professor Valentine Joseph Gold Medals and Memorial Scholarships

A gold medal and scholarship project established by CUFSAA-NA in memory of Professor Valentine Joseph, awards two gold medals, one for applied mathematics and one for computational mathematics, and provides

two scholarships for students enrolled in the special degree mathematics programs. Two students received scholarships, and Ms. B. C. Sewmini received the gold medal for applied mathematics in 2026. No student qualified for the computational mathematics gold medal.

Professor L.M.V. Tillekeratne Gold Medal and Honorary Scholarship

A gold medal and scholarship project established by students and friends of Professor L.M.V. Tillekeratne to honor this beloved professor for his decades of service to the Science Faculty. The project awards a gold medal to the most outstanding student in the chemistry special degree program and the scholarship to a rising second year student. One student received the scholarship, and the gold medal was awarded to Mr. M F A Ahamed in 2026.

Gold Medal for Special Degree Program in Computational Chemistry

A gold medal project, named "CUFSAA Gold Medal for Computational Chemistry" established by CUFSAA-NA awards a gold medal for the best student enrolled in the special degree program in computational chemistry. The gold medal was awarded to Mr. A M B De Zoysa in 2026.

4. CUFSAA-NA Facilitated Equipment Donations by Members

High-Performance Workstation and Graphic Monitor to the Department of Physics:
Through the generosity of CUFSAA-NA member Dr. Upali Jayamaha, the Department of Physics at the University of Colombo received a high-performance workstation and a graphic monitor valued at ~US$4,500. The workstation was assembled in Sri Lanka rather than purchased as a finished system from abroad.

This generous contribution will strengthen the Department's computational capabilities and support computationally intensive teaching and research activities, including scientific computing, numerical simulations, and data analysis. It will provide students and faculty with improved resources for advanced academic and research work.

CUFSAA-NA gratefully acknowledges Dr. Jayamaha's continued generosity and commitment to advancing science, education, and research at the University of Colombo. His support will make a valuable contribution to the Department's teaching and research activities. For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/vol11no01/.

MultispeQ instrument:

CUFSAA-NA has donated a MultispeQ instrument valued at ~US$2,500 to the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Colombo, supporting both teaching and research activities. This is the third MultispeQ instrument donated to the Department, further strengthening its research capabilities and providing valuable resources for students and faculty.

CUFSAA-NA gratefully acknowledges Dr. Prabode Weebadde, President and Co-Founder of PHOTOSYNQ Inc., and Professor Cholani Weebadde of the Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences at Michigan State University, for their generous donation of this equipment. Their continued support is helping advance scientific research and education at the University of Colombo. For further details visit
https://www.cufsaa.com/2025/10/multispeq/.

Microplate Reader:

CUFSAA-NA gratefully acknowledges Dr. Lakmal Boteju for his generous donation of a microplate reader valued at ~US$3,200. CUFSAA-NA also purchased a replacement lamp for ~US$844. Both items have been shipped and arrived in Sri Lanka at the end of September 2026. For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/vol11no01/.

5. North America Inter-University Alumni Softball Cricket Tournament

The 2026 North America Inter-University Alumni Softball Cricket Tournament brought together Sri Lankan university alumni for a memorable day of competitive cricket, sportsmanship, camaraderie, and university pride. CUFSAA-NA took its turn to organize the tournament and manage its finances, helping ensure the successful coordination of this inter-university event. In the Championship League, the University of Colombo emerged as champions, with the University of Moratuwa finishing as runners-up. In the Masters League, the University of Moratuwa secured the championship, while the University of Peradeniya placed second.

The tournament celebrated not only sporting achievement but also the enduring friendships and strong bonds among Sri Lankan university alumni in North America. CUFSAA-NA congratulates all participating teams and extends its sincere appreciation to the players, organizers, volunteers, families, friends, and supporters who contributed to the event's success. The tournament once again highlighted the spirit of unity and fellowship that brings alumni together through sport.

For further details and event highlights, visit the https://www.cufsaa.com/cricket-tournament-2026/.

On-going Projects:

1. Student Laptop Computer Loaner Program

CUFSAA-NA, in partnership with the Faculty of Science, has launched a Student Laptop Loaner Program to help students who cannot afford the equipment needed for Computer Science and other technology-dependent courses. The initial goal is to establish a pool of 20–25 laptops for students to use for coursework, examinations, projects, and thesis research. To date, 11 laptops have been purchased, with nine already delivered to the Faculty and two more expected to be delivered before the end of 2026. CUFSAA-NA is seeking additional member support to acquire the remaining 9–14 laptops and complete the initial pool**.**

2. Distinguished Speaker Series

CUFSAA-NA continued its Distinguished Speaker Series in 2026, connecting students with leading experts to broaden their scientific knowledge and support their academic and professional development. Organized by the CUFSAA-NA Speaker Series Subcommittee in association with the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, primarily for the benefit of science students in Sri Lanka.

CUFSAA-NA welcomes suggestions for topics and speakers from its members. To contact the subcommittee, please email speaker-series@cufsaa.org.

3. Membership and Member Services Project

CUFSAA-NA's Member Services Committee supports University of Colombo alumni in North America and students in Sri Lanka planning to pursue graduate studies in the United States and Canada through mentoring, career guidance, and professional development.

During the past year, several mentor–mentee matches were facilitated in response to requests submitted by members and also students in Sri Lanka through the CUFSAA-NA website. CUFSAA-NA gratefully acknowledges the members who volunteered their time and expertise to guide them in preparing for graduate studies and professional opportunities in North America.

A key new initiative during the year was the launch of the CUFSAA-NA Professional Development Seminar Series, designed to promote career advancement, networking, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing among alumni. The inaugural seminar, *"Your Career Starts With One Conversation – Five Themes: Journeys, Networking, Mentorship, Skills, Industry,"* was held on June 3, 2026, featuring four accomplished professionals from industry, academia, and biotechnology.

The second seminar, *"Science Was Always the Plan: Discover, Mentor, Inspire,"* featuring Dr. Irosha Nawarathne, is scheduled for October 21, 2026. These initiatives strengthen professional connections among alumni and provide opportunities to share experiences, gain practical career insights, and support the wider CUFSAA-NA community.

4. Establishment of Natural Resources-Based Nanofabrication Core Facility – Department of Physics

CUFSAA-NA is supporting the establishment of a Natural Resources-Based Nanofabrication Core Facility at the University of Colombo's Nanoscience and Microelectronics Research Laboratory (NMRL), Department of Physics. The facility aims to advance research and training in nanomaterials, microelectronics, semiconductor devices, and energy storage, with an emphasis on developing innovative applications from Sri Lanka's natural resources.

To date, ~US$36,400 has been raised, and the NMRL has received its first two pieces of equipment—a spin coater and a potentiostat/galvanostat workstation—with a combined value of approximately US$8,000. These instruments provide an initial foundation for thin-film deposition and electrochemical research. CUFSAA-NA extends its sincere appreciation to all donors and supporters. As of now, CUFSAA is awaiting prioritization from NMRL before proceeding with the ordering of the remaining items on the list.

5. High-Performance Workstations to the Department of Plant Sciences

The Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Colombo requires additional high-performance computing (HPC) resources to support advanced research in genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and systems biology. Existing systems lack sufficient memory and GPU capacity to process large datasets efficiently.

The Department proposes acquiring two custom-built HPC workstations at a combined estimated cost of US$11,272 (LKR 1,690,950 each). The systems will be built in Sri Lanka, and fundraising is currently underway.

CUFSAA-NA invites alumni and well-wishers to contribute toward the fundraising goal to strengthen computational research and student training. Donations may be directed to CUFSAA-NA with the designation "Plant Sciences HPC Workstations Project."

6. Statistics Department Computer Laboratory Upgrade Project

The Department of Statistics at the University of Colombo requires modern computers to improve teaching and research in statistics, data science, and analytics. Although its laboratory accommodates approximately 100 students, only 24 computers currently meet modern requirements, while many older machines struggle to run current software.

CUFSAA-NA aims to raise ~US$20,000 to donate at least 20 new computers, at an estimated cost of US$750–US$1,000 each. Fundraising is underway, with a subcommittee established to coordinate the initiative and engage Statistics alumni and professionals in related fields. CUFSAA-NA welcomes contributions to help equip students with the computing resources needed for practical learning and research.

7. Nuclear Science Department Equipment Project

The Department of Nuclear Science at the University of Colombo has identified essential equipment needs to strengthen undergraduate laboratory training and research. The proposed equipment includes three Geiger–Müller counters, a liquid scintillation counter, and a solid scintillation counter, with a total estimated cost of approximately US$11,500.

The initiative will be implemented in phases. Phase 1 will use ~US$2,080 currently available to purchase the three Geiger–Müller counters, while Phase 2 will focus on raising funds for the two scintillation counters.

CUFSAA-NA will coordinate the initiative through a project subcommittee involving Nuclear Science alumni, volunteers, and subject-matter experts. Additional contributions from alumni and well-wishers are welcomed to help provide students and researchers with essential equipment and strengthen the Department's nuclear science capabilities.

Detailed Report

In this report, we outline the activities of the Colombo University Faculty of Science Alumni Association – North America (CUFSAA-NA) completed or initiated during 2025-2026 as well as our ongoing projects. Furthermore, we articulate the future vision and aspirations of the association during the years ahead.

The 25-member "Fifth" Executive Committee of the Association was appointed at the fifth AGM held in-person on August 30, 2025, for the term 2025-2027. Dr. Chandrasiri Jayakody, was elected as the President of the Association. The executive committee continues to hold its regular monthly meetings *via* Zoom technology typically on the first Monday of each month to discuss the progress of current projects and subcommittees, associated activities, future projects, and finances of the organization.

The association's online presence through its website (https://www.cufsaa.com) and social media accounts on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/CUFSAA/), YouTube Channels (https://www.youtube.com/@CUFSAA and https://www.youtube.com/@CUFSAASpeakerSeries), Instagram (www.instagram.com/cufsaa_na), and LinkedIn account (https://www.linkedin.com/company/cufsaa/) are being used for informing the membership of the association's achievements and ongoing projects, releasing regular newsletters, promoting fundraising activities, as well as to attract new members from all over North America under one umbrella.

The following activities were completed, initiated, or continued during the reporting period from August 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026.

1. Synthetic Chemistry and Drug Discovery Laboratory Project

The Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, initiated a project to establish a modern Synthetic Chemistry and Drug Discovery Laboratory to overcome limitations in its existing research facilities and expand its capabilities in advanced chemical synthesis, materials chemistry, medicinal chemistry, and drug discovery. The new facility will strengthen postgraduate and undergraduate training, research collaboration, and opportunities for engagement with local and international industry partners.

CUFSAA-NA undertook responsibility for funding Phase 2 of the project, which included essential laboratory infrastructure and equipment such as fume hoods, chemical-resistant benches, Schlenk lines, solvent purification systems, rotary evaporators, balances, ovens, hotplates, stirrers, and other laboratory equipment. Due to delays in university funding for Phase 1, CUFSAA-NA also absorbed a portion of the Phase 1 costs. Through the generous support of CUFSAA-NA members, a total of ~US$50,300 was raised for the project. CUFSAA-NA successfully fulfilled its financial commitment in August 2026.

In recognition of his outstanding leadership and contribution to the project, the Faculty of Science and CUFSAA-NA have agreed that the laboratory will be named in honour of Prof. L.M.V. Tilakaratne. Prof. Tilakaratne, a former Dean of the Faculty of Science and founding President of CUFSAA-NA, served as the CUFSAA-NA project leader. His dedication, leadership, and fundraising efforts were instrumental in bringing this important project to completion.

The completed laboratory represents a significant achievement for CUFSAA-NA and a lasting contribution to strengthening scientific research at the University of Colombo. The official opening ceremony is planned for January 2027.

For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/synthetic-lab/

2. Launch Pad Student Grant Program

The Launch Pad Student Grant Program has become one of the flagship projects of CUFSAA-NA, providing direct financial assistance to undergraduate students and helping shape their future. The program was established by CUFSAA-NA in collaboration with the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, to support students facing severe financial hardship that threatens their ability to continue their education.

Under the program, 36 of the most financially disadvantaged special-degree students are selected each academic year to receive financial assistance equivalent to US$360 per student, provided in two six-month instalments.

The program has now entered its third cycle. As in previous cycles, an inter-departmental committee reviewed the applications and selected 36 students based on their financial circumstances. The selection process included detailed assessment and interviews to ensure that assistance was directed to students with the greatest

financial need. The 36 students selected for the third cycle received their first instalment in July 2026**,** with the second instalment scheduled for December 2026.

The continued success of the program has been made possible through the generosity of CUFSAA-NA alumni and well-wishers, together with the dedicated efforts of the Faculty of Science, the selection committee, and CUFSAA-NA volunteers. Financial assistance is transferred directly to the selected students, providing timely support during their academic year.

The personal messages received from students throughout the program demonstrate the significant difference this assistance has made. Their messages highlight the financial pressures faced by many undergraduates and the relief that this support provides, enabling them to continue their education despite difficult circumstances. These heartfelt messages can be viewed on the CUFSAA-NA website**:** Launch Pad Student Messages and Donor Dedications https://www.cufsaa.com/launchpadthankyou/ .

With the completion of the initial three-year commitment, CUFSAA-NA is now working to extend the Launch Pad program beyond its original three cycles so that future cohorts of financially disadvantaged students can continue to benefit from this important initiative.

CUFSAA-NA expresses its sincere gratitude to all donors, the Faculty of Science, the selection committee members, and everyone who has contributed to the success of the Launch Pad program. Special appreciation is extended to Dr. Kirthi Premadasa, who served as Launch Pad Project Chairperson and led the program through its initial three years. In August 2026, Kirthi handed over the leadership of the program to Prabath Kuruwitaarachchi**.** CUFSAA-NA thanks Kirthi for his dedicated service and wishes Prabath every success as he leads the program into its next phase.

For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/launch-pad/

3. Gold Medals and Scholarships

Professor M.L.T. Kannangara Gold Medal and Memorial Scholarships

Professor M.L.T. Kannangara, Emeritus Professor of Physics and former Head of the Department of Physics at the University of Colombo (UoC), made lasting contributions to physics research and education in Sri Lanka. He began his academic career at UoC in 1943, earned his PhD in Cosmic Ray Physics from the University of Manchester in 1953, and served the University until his retirement as Senior Professor in 1990. He was Head of the Department of Physics from 1978 to 1984.

Despite limited resources, Professor Kannangara published significant research on geomagnetic micropulsations in the *Journal of Geophysical Research*. He also helped establish a research collaboration between the University of Colombo and Uppsala University through the International Science Program, strengthening physics research and local PhD training.

His distinguished service included leadership in the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science, Fellowship of the Institute of Physics, London, and founding Fellowship of the National Academy of Sciences of

Sri Lanka. A respected teacher, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science degree by the University of Colombo in 1994.

To honour his legacy, CUFSAA-NA established two memorial awards with the approval of the University of Colombo. Supported by an endowment established by CUFSAA-NA, the M.L.T. Kannangara Memorial Gold Medal is awarded annually at the University Convocation to the most outstanding Physics Special Degree graduate who achieves First-Class Honours.

The M.L.T. Kannangara Memorial Scholarship provides financial assistance to Physics Special Degree students. One student is selected annually to receive support for two years, and there are currently two active scholarship recipients in the Department of Physics. Further contributions are greatly appreciated and will help sustain and expand this important program for future generations of Physics students.

Through these initiatives, CUFSAA-NA honours Professor Kannangara's contributions to physics research, teaching, and higher education while supporting talented students in pursuing their academic goals, and this prestigious award reflects the association's enduring commitment to recognizing and promoting academic excellence in Physics. For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/mltk/

Professor Valentine Joseph Gold Medals and Memorial Scholarships

Professor Valentine Joseph (1929–2017) was a distinguished mathematician and theoretical physicist who served the University of Colombo for over four decades. A specialist in general relativity, he was widely respected for his dedication to teaching and education. He also served as Chief Examiner for GCE Advanced Level Mathematics for over 20 years and authored mathematics textbooks.

To honour his legacy, CUFSAA-NA has sponsored an annual gold medal since 2020 for outstanding academic performance in the Computational Mathematics Special Degree programme. In 2024, a second gold medal was introduced to recognize excellence in Applied Mathematics.

Reflecting Professor Joseph's compassion for students, CUFSAA-NA has also supported two annual scholarships since 2020 for Mathematics students facing severe financial hardship. Each scholarship provides US$35 per month to help meet essential expenses and enable students to continue their studies.

For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/vj/

Professor L.M.V. Tillekeratne Gold Medal and Honorary Scholarship

The Professor L.M.V. Tillekeratne Gold Medal for Chemistry and Honorary Scholarship were established in 2022 by a group of former students, friends, and well-wishers of Professor Tillekeratne, using funds raised independently of CUFSAA-NA. These awards honour Professor Tillekeratne, one of the most cherished and influential professors of his time, in recognition of his lifelong dedication to teaching, mentoring, and student welfare.

Professor Tillekeratne has had a profound and lasting impact on generations of students at the University of Colombo. For many of his former students, his influence extends well beyond their university years. Even decades later, he continues to inspire and guide them, offering valuable advice and encouraging them to pursue meaningful and rewarding career paths.

His commitment to the University of Colombo has continued beyond his time at the University. In 2016, he founded CUFSAA-NA, a non-profit organization established to unite Faculty of Science alumni across the United States and Canada in support of their alma mater. He served as its founding President during its first two years and continues to contribute actively as a member of the Executive Committee.

Introduced in 2022 in partnership with the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Science, the Gold Medal recognizes excellence in Chemistry, while the Honorary Scholarship provides need-based financial assistance to a second-year undergraduate student who has successfully completed the first-year coursework and is experiencing the most severe financial hardship. The scholarship addresses an important gap in student support, as relatively few scholarships are available to students at this stage of their undergraduate studies.

For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/lmvt/

Gold Medal for Special Degree Program in Computational Chemistry

Established in the 2019/2020 academic year, the CUFSAA-NA Gold Medal for Computational Chemistry is awarded annually to the student achieving the best overall performance in the Computational Chemistry Honours Degree examination, provided the student earns First-Class or Second-Class Upper Division Honours.

For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/compuchemgoldmedal/

4. Student Laptop Computer Loaner Program

The Information Technology Services Center (ITSC), located in the Student Service Center building at the University of Colombo, provides computer laboratory facilities to support student learning. Computer Science is an important component of the undergraduate curriculum at the Faculty of Science, with more than 600 Level 1 students and approximately 500 Level 2 students. The University offers four Computer Science courses in Levels 1 and 2, while computational techniques are also integrated into numerous courses across the Faculty.

Many courses combine online and classroom instruction with hands-on computer activities, and some examinations require students to use computers. However, a considerable number of students, particularly those from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and rural areas, cannot afford to purchase suitable laptops. This limits their ability to participate fully in academic activities and benefit from the educational opportunities available to them, potentially affecting their future postgraduate studies and career prospects.

To help address this disparity, the Faculty of Science has partnered with CUFSAA-NA to establish a Student Laptop Loaner Program**,** through which students who cannot afford their own laptops can borrow them for specific academic activities, including coursework, examinations, projects, and thesis research. The initial goal is to establish a pool of 20–25 laptops to support students in need.

Significant progress has been made in implementing this initiative. To date, 11 laptops have been purchased, of which nine have already been delivered and donated to the Faculty of Science through the generous assistance

of volunteers travelling to Sri Lanka. Two additional volunteers have agreed to transport one laptop each to the Faculty before the end of 2026.

CUFSAA-NA extends its sincere appreciation to all donors whose generosity has made this progress possible and to the volunteers who have helped transport the laptops to Sri Lanka.

To achieve the initial target, a further 9–14 laptops need to be purchased. CUFSAA-NA invites its members and well-wishers to contribute generously towards completing the initial pool. Their support will help ensure that financial hardship does not prevent students from fully participating in their academic programs and pursuing their educational and career aspirations.

5. Distinguished Speaker Series

The CUFSAA-NA Distinguished Speaker Series connects students with leading experts to broaden their scientific knowledge, explore emerging developments in science, and support their academic and professional development. Organized by the CUFSAA-NA Speaker Series Subcommittee in association with the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, the series provides students with opportunities to learn from experienced researchers and professionals, gain new perspectives, and explore potential career and research pathways.

The talks are delivered live via Zoom, usually at 8:00 PM Sri Lanka time, primarily for the benefit of science students in Sri Lanka. The series also provides a platform for sharing knowledge and strengthening connections between the University community and experts in diverse fields.

CUFSAA-NA welcomes suggestions from its members for future topics and speakers. Members interested in contributing ideas or contacting the subcommittee may email speaker-series@cufsaa.org. For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/speaker-series/. Recordings of past presentations are available on the CUFSAA-NA Speaker Series YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/@CUFSAASpeakerSeries .

Presentations from the past year:

Prof. Krishni Wijesooriya – From Bedside to Model: Multisite Analysis of Immune Suppression – *April 30, 2026: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cvGVc-OACo*

Dr. Thilani Bhagya Jayakody – Evaluation and Development of Resources for Genome Editing and Genetic Engineering in Solanum tuberosum – *May 25, 2026* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAqMWNgWzSU

Dr. Soutik Ghosal – Real-World Applications of Biostatistics in Health Research – *June 18, 2026: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBqXVUhtYgI*

Dr. Charuksha Walgama – Graduate Studies Abroad and Beyond: Building a Successful Career in Science – *July 20, 2026: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eD8BMA_XxUM*

Dr. Jay R. Thiagarajah – The Geography of Redox: Spatial Niches and the Control of Cellular Signaling and Function – *October 07, 2026 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOIHMU27IMI*

6. Membership and Member Services Project

CUFSAA-NA's Member Services Committee was established to serve University of Colombo alumni living in North America and current students in Sri Lanka who plan to pursue graduate studies in the United States and Canada. Its activities focus on career guidance, professional development, mentoring, advising to help students prepare for academic and professional opportunities, and to help incoming graduate students settle into their new communities when they arrive in North America.

As of September 30, 2026, CUFSAA-NA had 700+ members. The association welcomes former students, academic staff, and, in particular, junior alumni of the UoC Faculty of Science residing in the United States and Canada to join and support its mission. Interested individuals can apply online through the CUFSAA-NA Membership Form at https://www.cufsaa.com/membership-form/. Membership is free.

Mentoring and Career Guidance

During the past year, the committee facilitated several mentor–mentee matches in response to requests submitted through the CUFSAA-NA website by members and also by students in Sri Lanka. These connections enable them to benefit from the experience and guidance of alumni as they prepare for graduate studies and future career opportunities in North America. CUFSAA-NA extends its sincere appreciation to the members who volunteered their time and expertise to mentor and guide these students.

Professional Development Seminar Series

The CUFSAA-NA Professional Development Seminar Series was introduced as a new initiative under the Member Services Project to promote career advancement, professional learning, and networking among alumni in North America. The series provides opportunities for members to learn from experienced professionals, exchange knowledge, develop practical skills, and strengthen connections within the UoC Faculty of Science alumni community.

Topics include career planning and advancement, networking, mentorship, résumé and LinkedIn development, interview preparation, leadership, industry insights, entrepreneurship, and career transitions. For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/networking/.

Talk 01: Your Career Starts With One Conversation – Five Themes: Journeys, Networking, Mentorship, Skills, Industry:

The inaugural seminar was held on June 3, 2026, at 9:00 p.m. EST. The panel featured four professionals representing industry, academia, and biotechnology: Randara Pulukkody, Senior R&D Leader at Dow Industrial Solutions; Harshica Fernando, Associate Professor of Chemistry at Prairie View A&M University in Texas; Chryshanie Fernandopulle, Executive Director at Morgan Stanley in New York; and Kushan Gunawardena, Associate Director of Translational Medicine at Mineralys Therapeutics. The session was facilitated by Binodh DeSilva, Senior Vice President of Bioanalytical and Biomarker Development at Ultragenyx Pharmaceutical.

The seminar gave participants an opportunity to learn from the panellists' professional journeys and gain practical insights into networking, mentorship, career development, and the skills needed to succeed in diverse professional environments.

Talk 02: Science Was Always the Plan – Discover, Mentor, Inspire:

The second seminar, featuring Dr. Irosha Nawarathne, is scheduled for October 21, 2026, at 9:00 p.m. EST. The session continues the series' focus on professional growth and knowledge-sharing, offering alumni an opportunity to gain insights and inspiration from an accomplished professional.

Through its membership outreach, mentoring activities, and Professional Development Seminar Series, CUFSAA-NA continues to strengthen support for students preparing for graduate studies in North America and promote professional growth and meaningful connections among alumni. These efforts reinforce the association's commitment to building a strong, engaged, and supportive UoC Faculty of Science alumni community across the United States and Canada.

7. Establishment of Natural Resources-Based Nanofabrication Core Facility – Department of Physics

The Department of Physics at the University of Colombo aims to strengthen its research and teaching capabilities in nanomaterials, microelectronics, semiconductor devices, and energy storage technologies. A key objective is to transform Sri Lanka's natural resources, including vein graphite, mica, limonite, and rutile (TiO_2), into advanced materials and innovative technological applications.

To address the Department's need for specialized equipment, CUFSAA-NA undertook to support the establishment of a Natural Resources-Based Nanofabrication Core Facility, initially proposed as a Solid-State Device Laboratory. The facility is being developed as the Nanoscience and Microelectronics Research Laboratory (NMRL) at UoC in four phases, with CUFSAA-NA committed to raising funds for Phase 1.

The facility is expected to support research into graphene nanoplatelets, carbon nanotubes and other two-dimensional materials, transistor fabrication, supercapacitors, and solar cells. It will also provide hands-on training for students and researchers, support the development of courses in device physics and microelectronics fabrication, and encourage collaboration with other academic and industrial institutions. The establishment of NMRL and its success will not only help UOC but also science students in general (Initially at Moratuwa) and will expand to other universities as a user facility.

Through the generosity of CUFSAA-NA alumni, donors, and well-wishers in Sri Lanka, the United States, and Canada, ~US$36,400 has been raised to date toward establishing the facility.

The NMRL has received its first two pieces of equipment—a spin coater and a potentiostat/galvanostat workstation—with a combined value of approximately US$8,000. These instruments provide initial capabilities for thin-film deposition and electrochemical characterization, including research relevant to supercapacitors.

The NMRL group leader coordinated with the Head of the Department of Physics and the Dean's Office to facilitate customs clearance. CUFSAA-NA is prepared to support further equipment acquisition as immediate research priorities are identified.

CUFSAA-NA sincerely thanks all contributors for helping strengthen research infrastructure and advanced scientific training at UoC. For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/nanofabrication_facilty/.

8. High-Performance Workstations to the Department of Plant Sciences

The Department of Plant Sciences has a growing need for high-performance computing (HPC) resources to support advanced research and undergraduate training in genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and systems biology. In 2021, the Department received two high-performance computers through a generous CUFSAA-NA donation. These systems have been effectively utilized, particularly by students in the Bioinformatics Honours degree program for their final-year research projects. The facility has enabled several students to undertake research of publication quality, resulting in papers published in SCI Expanded–indexed journals—a notable achievement at the undergraduate level.

The Department's current HPC capacity, however, is insufficient for the growing demands of modern research. Many projects involve large datasets, often 100–300 GB, generated through next-generation sequencing (NGS). The existing systems have limited memory and GPU capacity, making it difficult to run complete analysis pipelines efficiently and within a reasonable timeframe.

To address this need, the Department has proposed acquiring two additional custom-built HPC workstations, each estimated at LKR 1,690,950, with a combined cost of approximately US$11,272. The systems will be built in Sri Lanka and will enhance the Department's capacity for large-scale genomic and computational research while supporting advanced student training.

Fundraising for this initiative is currently underway**.** CUFSAA-NA gratefully acknowledges the continued generosity of its donors and welcomes contributions toward this important research and educational initiative. For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/plantsciproject2/.

9. Statistics Department Computer Laboratory Upgrade Project

The Department of Statistics at the University of Colombo is seeking support to upgrade its main computer laboratory, an essential learning facility for undergraduate and postgraduate students in statistics, data science, and analytics.

Although the laboratory can accommodate approximately 100 students, only 24 computers currently meet the requirements for modern teaching and research. Approximately 40 older computers remain in use, some dating back to 2009, and many struggle to run current software. These limitations increasingly affect programming-based practical sessions and examinations.

Modern computing facilities are essential for students to develop practical skills in statistical analysis, programming, machine learning, and data visualization using tools such as R, Python, SPSS, and other specialized software. Upgrading the laboratory will strengthen practical learning, improve educational opportunities, and better prepare graduates for careers in an increasingly data-driven world.

The Department estimates that at least 40 new computers are needed, at an estimated cost of US$750–US$1,000 per computer (approximately LKR 250,000–350,000). Given the high cost of purchasing computers in Sri Lanka, CUFSAA-NA aims to raise US$15,000–US$20,000 to donate at least 20 computers toward meeting this need.

CUFSAA-NA is proceeding with fundraising efforts, and a subcommittee has been formed to coordinate the initiative. The fundraising campaign will particularly target Statistics alumni and professionals working in statistics, data science, analytics, and related fields. Currently, ~US$980 has been raised.

Support this initiative by contributing to CUFSAA-NA and specifying that your donation is for the Department of Statistics Computer Laboratory Project. Every contribution will help provide students with the modern computing resources they need for effective learning and research.

For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/statlab-upgrade/.

10. Nuclear Science Department Equipment Project

The Department of Nuclear Science at the University of Colombo is one of the smallest and most underfunded departments in the Faculty of Science. Limited access to modern equipment presents challenges for both undergraduate laboratory training and research. To address these needs, the Department has identified several essential radiation-detection and measurement instruments that would significantly strengthen its teaching and research capabilities.

The proposed equipment includes three Geiger–Müller counters, estimated at approximately US$500 each, a liquid scintillation counter at approximately US$5,000, and a solid scintillation counter at approximately US$5,000. These instruments will provide students with improved opportunities for practical laboratory training while supporting research activities involving radiation detection, measurement, and nuclear science.

The initiative will be implemented in phases. Phase 1 will use the ~US$2,080 currently available to purchase the three Geiger–Müller counters. Phase 2 will focus on raising additional funds to acquire the liquid and solid scintillation counters.

CUFSAA-NA plans to establish a project subcommittee and engage Nuclear Science alumni, volunteers, and subject-matter experts to coordinate the initiative, identify potential sources of support, and assist with fundraising. The project represents an opportunity to provide students with better hands-on training while strengthening the Department's capacity to undertake research and develop future expertise in nuclear science.

CUFSAA-NA welcomes contributions from alumni and well-wishers to help fund this initiative and provide the Department with much-needed equipment for teaching and research.

Ear-marked Funds and Programs:

Science Faculty Benevolent Fund

The Science Faculty Benevolent Fund originated in 2016 as an emergency initiative to assist University of Colombo Faculty of Science students affected by unexpected flooding. Recognizing the need for continued assistance to students facing unforeseen financial difficulties, CUFSAA-NA subsequently formalized the initiative as an Emergency Fund to provide financial support in times of need. The fund was later renamed the Science Faculty Benevolent Fund.

The fund provides financial assistance of up to Rs. 25,000 per student, as circumstances warrant, without requiring prior consultation with CUFSAA-NA. The Benevolent Fund is maintained as a permanent fund of CUFSAA-NA to provide ongoing support to Faculty of Science students experiencing financial hardship or unexpected emergencies.

In December 2025, with the approval of the CUFSAA-NA Executive Committee, US$340 (Rs. 100,000) was provided to a student who had been hospitalized following an injury. For further details visit https://www.cufsaa.com/scifacfund/

Future Vision

Over the past year, CUFSAA-NA has continued to advance its mission through projects and initiatives that benefit students, academic staff, and the Faculty of Science at the University of Colombo. These efforts reflect our enduring commitment to our alma mater and would not have been possible without the dedication, generosity, and continued support of our members. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the association's work and achievements.

Looking ahead, CUFSAA-NA remains committed to enhancing the academic experience of students, promoting excellence in education and research, and helping students realize their full potential. We will continue to work in partnership with the dedicated faculty and staff of the Faculty of Science to provide resources, opportunities, and support that strengthen the quality of education and research while nurturing future generations of leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

The continued growth and success of CUFSAA-NA depend on the active involvement of our alumni community. We encourage former students and academic staff of the Faculty of Science, particularly those who have not yet joined the association, to become members (https://www.cufsaa.com/membership-form/) and participate in our activities . We welcome volunteers to lead projects, chair committees, support ongoing programs, and contribute their knowledge, skills, and experience. Every contribution—whether of time, talent, expertise, or financial resources—helps us extend our reach and increase our impact.

As we build on the progress achieved over the years, we look forward to expanding our initiatives, strengthening our partnership with the Faculty of Science, and creating further opportunities for students and researchers. We once again thank our members for their active participation, generosity, and steadfast commitment to CUFSAA-NA's mission. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to our alma mater and the generations of students who will shape its future.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted, Mahendra Munidasa (Secretary), Indika Mallawaarachchi – Assistant Secretary
CUFSAA-NA **https://www.cufsaa.com**